

**REMARKS**

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the application identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.111 and in light of the remarks which follow, are respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully request acknowledgement of the foreign priority claim in the present application, as well as acknowledgement of the receipt of the priority documents in parent Application No. 09/880,944.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claim 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the subject matter of the base claim and any intervening claims (Official Action at page 4).

By the above amendments, claims 9, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21 and 22 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. The subject matter of claims 18 and 19 has been incorporated into claim 16. In light of the cancellation of claim 19, claim 20 has been amended to depend from claim 16.

In the Official Action, claims 16-18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0052937 (*Ito et al*). As discussed above, claim 16 has been amended to incorporate the features of claim 19, which has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. As such, for at least this reason, withdrawal of the above rejection is respectfully requested.

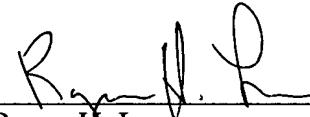
Claims 21 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Japanese Patent Document No. 2000-009912. Without addressing the propriety of this rejection, it is noted that such rejection is moot in light of the cancellation of claims 21 and 22.

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order, and such action is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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